

## *Eastern Forest Landowners: Who's Buying What and Why?*

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### *Highlights*

- **The number of nonindustrial private forestland ownerships has increased over the past 20 years**
- **More than half own fewer than 10 acres**
- **90% own fewer than 50 acres**
- **95% of private forest ownerships in the East are held by individuals, who control 65% of the privately owned forestland**
- **The increase in numbers of ownerships makes it difficult to communicate habitat management opportunities such as federal programs**
- **Reduction in tract size complicates management because forest management becomes less commercially viable**
- **47% of private owners have timber harvesting experience**
- **Decline of shrub layer because of overstocking in the overstory is a factor in the decline of species that nest and forage in this layer**

- **34% of owners say they never intend to harvest; they own 61% of private forestland**
- **Retired owners increased both in the proportion of owners and the proportion of acreage owned**
- **25% of all ownerships (26% of private forestland in the East) are owned by individuals over 65 years of age**
- **Only 3% of private forestland owners hold their land primarily for timber production**
- **Only 5% of private forestland owners have a written management plan, covering 35% of the private forests in the East**
- **By 2020, almost 50% of owners will be people who first acquired forestland after today**
- ***There are 3 major trends***
  - 1) **parcelization of forest lands into increasingly smaller tracts**
  - 2) **rapid turnover of lands currently owned by retirees, white-collar workers, and farmers**
  - 3) **increased public influence on the management of private forests through regulation, “best management practices,” or forest plans written through some public program**